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MATWATCH

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Steve's Sidelights By Steve Beverly

TURNER'S NWA: THE NEXT 6 MONTHS

My daddy always told me if you spend too much time dwelling on the past, you're denying yourself valuable time to get the future in order. Last week, we pretty well put to bed the George Scott era of NWA wrestling. Instead, I'd rather focus on the future of this group, which in the last two weeks, appears to have rediscovered its I.Q.

Mind you, my opinion and 35 cents will get you a cup of coffee at 7-Eleven. But let's walk down the road for the next six months and look at the ol' MATWATCHer's perspective on key NWA elements:

***BOOKING. NWA executives Jack Petrik and Jim Herd are opting to give the committee system with the members MATWATCH named last week a six-month trial. I'm told Bill Watts was interviewed and favorably received but the committee has come up with so many creative ideas and is developing enough long-range plans that Watts will not be brought in at present.

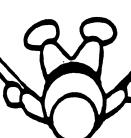
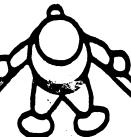
I am of the belief the committee can succeed with a strong chairman to keep wrestlers' egos in check and the company good in the forefront. If Herd is too tied up running the business, Jim Ross should be that chairman.

***STORYLINES. Again, nobody asked---but the ideal path is to do as the network soap writers do, develop a long-range high point in stories and build everything else around them. In other words, book STARRCADE and the other pay-per-view shows now and work in reverse. Unless an actor unexpectedly does not renew a contract, you can bet Leonard Katzman knows the previous summer what his ideal cliffhanger will be on DALLAS the following spring. The same logic follows here. Television, the arenas, publications, everything works to a fever pitch on the big shows.

***TELEVISION. Ross & Michael Hayes are a tremendous combination. Bob Caudle & Kevin Sullivan are settling into a pattern on NWA PRO and now, Lance Russell, in my view, needs a permanent color commentator ---and not necessarily heel, just to give WORLD WIDE a different flavor. Lance also needs to be used in a much more interactive fashion with the wrestlers, a la Memphis, and I'm told steps are being taken to do just that.

Next, leave the announcing teams alone for a while. After the fruitbasket since Tony Schiavone left, the mike matchups on every show but NWA MAIN EVENT have been unstable and it unsettles viewers the same as a news anchor team which is constantly switching faces.

Equally important to having a quality match on each show is having lots of angles to advance the storylines, the ideal soap opera pattern. With Gilbert, Ross & Sullivan on the panel and input from



Ric Flair, I'm confident of the result.

Lastly, there should be more interactivity between the TBS and syndicated shows. I'm all for exclusivity but many areas of the country still aren't wired for cable. If a hot angle happens on TBS and a family only gets NWA PRO or WORLD WIDE in its area, those people are denied the episode in the story if at least clips of the cable angle aren't shown in syndication the week after. Likewise, the reciprocal should be followed for people who only get TBS and no syndication.

Another way to accomplish this is with the proposed Friday night series, which I believe should be on the order of THE NWA THIS WEEK and take you around the horn to one key match or angle from all four NWA programs each with followup comments from wrestlers and the announcers involved. That show should also contain personality profiles, sidebar features on the wrestlers and an NWA FLASHBACK. For those who knew it was coming, a lot of interest was generated in the ex-champions present at CLASH VI. Capitalize on that. Bring Lou Thesz, Harley Race, Buddy Rogers---any of the more articulate ex-champs in and have them lead into a meaningful match in NWA history. Surely, the clips can be found and packaged into an attractive insert.

***PERSONNEL. Keep bringing in the younger guys and develop them. With a roster of Brian Pillman, Tom Prichard, Keiji Muto, Shane Douglas, the Samoan Swat Team, the soon-to-come Ricky Santana and, hopefully, Owen Hart, the NWA will likely have the most impressive group of under-30 workers in the profession. A stronger effort should be made to allow some of the better jobber guys break out into an elevated role (i.e., Bob Emory, the departed Curtis Thompson, etc.). The Sting TV title victory was long overdue and an eventual turn of Muto (but not too quickly---let it play its course in the heel venue and then make the turn meaningful.)

Finally, a Ric Flair turn---in my view---should NOT be done until the houses return to an acceptable level (regularly in the 5,000-8,000 range in the larger houses). Don't use his eventual turn to catalyze an improvement in bad houses. Do it at a time to leverage \$100,000-150,000 houses on a consistent basis.

Despite Ricky Steamboat's unfortunate failure to win dominating popularity as a babyface NWA world champion (and it's simply not his fault vs. the unmatched love for Flair), he has brought a dimension to the recent championship series I can't imagine any other U.S. wrestler, short of Barry Windham and possibly an Owen Hart five years hence doing. And if Flair regains the title May 7, I hope Steamboat sticks around because I could see some exciting Steamboat-Muto matches in the works.

I sincerely believe a foundation is genuinely being laid---unlike the talk I was passed when Scott arrived---to turn this thing around. In just two weeks, people are cautiously confident again. Let's hope this time we see a distinct and successful rally. As I've stated many times prior, I don't begrudge Vince McMahon's business success (though I do question many of his ethics and practices). But the worst thing for pro wrestling would be for fans to only have one major promotion as a choice.

THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

TITAN CLAIMS 8.3% FOR WRESTLEMANIA V

BUT INVESTIGATION SHOWS 5.5-6%

STAMFORD CT - Titan Sports is claiming one million cable subscribers (an 8.3% buy rate) for the April 2 WRESTLEMANIA V, according to The Hollywood Reporter. But an investigation by MATWATCH and a similar check by THE WRESTLING OBSERVER place the figure at 5.5-6%. Titan officials told the Reporter pay-cable revenues topped \$25 million. But cable industry sources have told MATWATCH final figures, which won't be known for 60 days, will be more in the range of \$15-16 million. Some Titan insiders are known to be disappointed at the buy-ins.

The Reporter story quoted Titan executives claiming the gross revenue will top that of the record Mike Tyson-Michael Spinks boxing match and a total gross by the time other ancillary figures are in of \$50 million, a figure strongly disputed by other industry experts.

Cable sources have told us WM5 cleared approximately 10 million homes and probably drew, at most, 600,000 homes.

CLASH VI DRAWS 4.3 RATING;
DOWN 26% FROM '88 SHOW

ATLANTA - CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS VI was seen in more than two million homes, according to A.C. Nielsen figures, but the 4.3 rating for the 3½-hour telecast was down 26% from the premiere CLASH in 1988.

CLASH VI, airing opposite WRESTLEMANIA V, was seen in 2.1 million homes, totaling five million viewers. Not figured in is the number watching on VCRs after WM5. Industry estimates place that figure near 700,000 homes, or 1.7 million viewers (a figure which would be adjusted downward if cable estimates of the WM5 buy-rate are correct).

The peak rating came during the Ricky Steamboat-Ric Flair NWA world title rematch, won by Steamboat, with a 5 rating and 11.2 share. The entire show posted a 10.2 share, second highest in the history of the CLASH series but the rating was the lowest ever, in part because the number of overall U.S. homes using television were below average.

NWA officials had hoped for a 5 to 5.5 rating but weak promotion in the four weeks leading to the show likely hurt audience interest. The Steamboat-Flair rating declined 34% from the 7.1 posted for Flair vs. Sting in 1988.

TBS officials, however, were pleased. Program executive Jeff Carr says TBS "dominated the entire day on cable with the CLASH and our movies."

RATINGS RAP: SYNDICATION

	Rating	Stations	Pct./U.S.
WWF	10.0	234	96%
NWA	5.9	143	90%
ALL-PRO NETWORK	5.7	83	76%

(ANALYSIS: This is the first week in at least two months---the weekend of March 18-19) that syndication figures have been available for all three national packages. The WWF has gained about a point and a half since fall and the NWA is down about a point. The All-Pro group---WCCW, CWA, PWTW, etc.---has lost about 27 stations since our last report.)

COMINGS & GOINGS

OWEN WATCH: Here's the latest on Owen...he was offered a sweetened financial deal to continue with the WWF through its European tour. The NWA is working hard to get him and has talked with his father, Stu. But we're told Vince is trying hard to convince him to stay with Titan as Owen Hart, not the Blazer.

THE P&P BOYS: Brian Pillman & Tom Prichard were with the NWA tour in Florida and are on the payroll but have not worked yet because the brass wants to be sure they're introduced properly and don't have to tinker with their identities. Debate is still on as to whether they'll be heels or faces.

MORE PEOPLE: Ricky Santana, who's been on the Puerto Rico circuit, apparently may get the call from the NWA and could be used on the May 7 show.

WWF AFTER WM5: For my 2 cents: it may go over big but I think pairing Liz with Hulk Hogan and Sherri Martel with Randy Savage is a big mistake. Sherri only brings a sleaze factor to it and I didn't even feel Saturday's angles leading to the new pairings were well done. We'll see what the fans say.

GARVIN GAB: Ronnie is still doing WWF interviews, at least as of the past weekend, so he hasn't made the hit list yet. The NWA brass is saying unless it's someone who can genuinely help them, they aren't interested in Vince's cuts. Quite a turnaround from what George Scott wanted.

CHALLENGING THE CHALLENGER: WCW President Jack Petrik told MATWATCH the NWA will have an "NWA Weekend" in Nashville as part of a counterchallenge to Vince's night-before the May 7 PPV. All the NWA stars will be appearing live for three hours at one of the newest malls in Nashville the night of May 6 and will sign autographs and pose for pictures without charge for fans.

MORE MALL: Three radio stations are doing promotions for the Mall Show and PPV in Nashville and one or two will broadcast live from the site. In addition, fans will be given free gifts. The promotion is much like the World of Wheels tie-ins to wrestling previously done in Atlanta.

CONDOLENCES: We've made a few jokes the last couple of weeks, totally unaware until last Wednesday that Southern owner Jerry Blackwell has lost a son to cancer. Our heartfelt sympathies go to Jerry and his family.

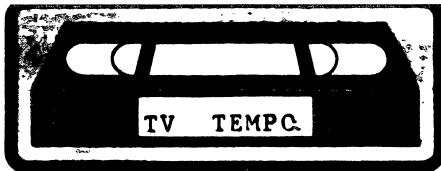
MORE SCW: Because of the death, Blackwell's group produced a recap show this past week in place of a live taping. Gordon Clements emceed a review of current feuds.

(Continued on Page 6)

CABLE RATINGS RAP

	Rating	Share	Tot. Homes
CLASH VI (TBS 4/2)	4.3	10.2	2.1 mil.
WWF PRIME TIME (USA 4/3)	2.7	4.4	1.26 mil.
WWF ALL-AMERICAN (USA 4/2)	2.6	8.0	1.22 mil.
NWA WORLD CHAMP. (TBS 4/1)	2.0	3.5	958,000
COUNTDOWN TO CL. (TBS 3/31)	1.5	2.9	730,000
COUNTDOWN TO CL. (TBS 4/1)	1.0	6.9	500,000

(ANALYSIS: Everything was down for the weekend ending April 3. ALL-AMERICAN fell prey to the same low Homes-Using-TV disease as did CLASH VI. PRIME TIME probably dipped because people had (1) had enough wrestling over the weekend and (2) of the weakness of the show. The COUNTDOWN rating was a disappointment to TBS but almost no one knew about the show. The repeat, airing in the NWA MAIN EVENT a.m. slot did almost as well but it's not likely its audience duplicated much of the late-night first-run viewers. Even with the NCAA basketball semifinals opposite, the WCW rating is a shocker and can be partially chalked to the viewers finally revolting against the George Scott format.)



(FLORIDA) - Al Perez d. Mike Awesome; Steelman d. Ric Diamond/Cliff Sheats; Steve Keirn/Mike Graham/Scott Hall win DQ over The Terminator/Commandos when Commando Ray throws out the ref; ARENA: Johnny Ace/Terminator lose Florida tag belts to Nasty Boys when Black Bart throws Terminator branding iron, Brian Knobbs ducks & Term hits Johnny Ace. Bart & Bobby Jaggers beat up Ace and Terminator abandons him; STUDIO: FLA. TAG TITLE, Bart/Jaggers d. Nasty Boys for belts; Italian Stallion d. El Diablo. ARENA CLIP: Dustin Rhodes injured by Oliver Humperdink & Bart (out 3 weeks). ANGLE: Humperdink tapes Steelman's fists and Dick Slater comes out with taped fists and they battle; Terry Funk challenges Dusty Rhodes to Texas Chainsaw Massacre Match. POWERSLAM.

(CWA/SYND.) - Jeff Jarrett/Tracy Smothers/John Paul d. Executioners/Keith Eric; Lord Humongous d. Yates/Elder/Heenan in handicap match; UNIFIED WORLD TITLE: Master of Pain d. Jerry Lawler for title when Dutch Mantel throws billy club to M.O.P. Match had been set up by Ronald V. Gossett IV offering to get in ring with Lawler if Jerry would defend belt vs. M.O.P. Dutch was handcuffed to security guard and broke free while fighting guard on WMC parking lot. Gossett then entered ring and stomped Lawler. ANGLE: Robert Fuller claims Jerry Jarrett "stole" CWA territory from his uncle, Roy Welch. POWERSLAM-PLUS.

(ACW) - Colt Steel d. Rusty Riddle; Ivan Koloff d. Len Wagner; Sam Houston d. Gene Ligon; Nelson Royal wins DQ over David Isley when David throws Nelson over the top rope; ACW TV TITLE FINALS: Tommy Angel d. M.O.D. Squad Spike on reverse decision when Baby Doll tells ref Spike was holding trunks. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(SCW) - RECAP show hosted by Gordon Clements: Jerry Blackwell d. Bob Bennett; Eddie Gilbert d. Steve Prichard; Texas Outlaws d. Bucky Siegler/Chuck McCall; Bruiser Brody double DQ vs. Abdullah the Butcher (Brody's last U.S. match); Dino Minnelli/Steve Lawler tar & feather Joey Maggs; Tommy Rich double DQ Terry Gordy. DRAW.

(PWTW) - WWF, WMS results; CWA, Mason-Dixon Connection d. Delta Force; ACW, Tommy Angel d. Colt Steel; NWA, Lex Luger d. Bob Leet; WCCW, Eric Embry d. Botswana Beast; CWF, Continental Cat funeral; SCW, Ga. Power/John Michaels no decision w. Minnelli/Lawler/Joe Deaton. MARS WRESTLER OF WEEK - Hulk Hogan.

(WCCW) - Beauty & the Beast d. Chris Adams/Cpl. Braddock with help from heel ref Harold Harris. Adams KOs Harris afterward; Matt Borne d. Bobby Durrell; Eric Embry vs. Killer Brooks ends in Devastation run in and Percy Pringle being beaten with iron bar and doing major juice job (almost too strong for TV); Steve & Schaun Simpson vs. Gary Young/Cactus Jack Manson no decision when Devastation, Embry run in. ANGLE: Frank Dusek reinstates Embry after heavy fan mail. DRAW-PLUS.

(CWF) - Recap show: Continental Cat funeral; Jeff Jarrett video; Kerry Von Erich video; Bill Dundee/Mike Davis d. Johnnny & Davey Rich when Mr. Chono throws salt at Davey; Hunters d. Brad Anderson/Rick Valentino; Wendell Cooley-Tom Prichard feud; Todd Morton/Danny Davis d. Alan Martin/The Cobra; ANGLE: Doug Furnas attacked by Terry Gordy. DRAW....okay review show.

(PORTLAND) - Beetlejuice d. C.W. Bergstrom; Scotty the Body d. Rex King; Steve Doll d. Scott Peterson; Top Gun d. Joey Jackson; Jonathan Boyd d. Al Madrid by DQ; N.W. TITLE: Carl Stiles d. The Grappler for belt in match where Nord the Barbarian was to be in Grappler's corner and Brian Adams in Stiles'. Nord doesn't show and Brian is ordered from ringside. As Stiles applies full nelson, Nord tries to enter but Adams stops him and Grappler concedes but major brawl breaks out before a pullapart. THE LAUNDROMAT: Scotty's new segment polarizes tensions between Doll & Peterson which leads to match, in which Scotty knocks out Peterson with knucks as ref is detained and puts knucks on Doll's hand. POWERSLAM....most entertaining and improved show.

(WWF/PRIME TIME) - Tony Schiavone & Sean Mooney host pro-gran-length commercial for Coliseum Videos, including clips of Rick Rude vs. Jake Roberts from WM4, Robin Smith vs. Judy Martin at Royal Rumble II, Hogan-Andre from WM3. BOMB.

(WWF/SYND.) - [SUPERSTARS]: NOTE: All 3 shows offered Hogan/Savage, Warrior/Rude and Andre/Jake clips from WMS. ARENA: Tito Santana d. Jose Estrada; Brainbusters d. Omar Atlas/Scott Casey; Bad News Brown d. Frankie Valdez; Brutus Beefcake d. Steve Stone; Barbarian d. Ricky Ataki. BOMB-PLUS. [SPOTLIGHT]: Red Rooster d. Barry Horowitz; Sheepwackers d. Danny Davis/Estrada; Demolition d. Lou Fabiano/Black Knight.

ANGLE: As Randy Savage threatens to destroy Elizabeth, Hulk Hogan saves and is attacked from behind by Sherri Martel. This sets up Liz/Hogan and Martel/Savage pairings. (This is also aired on all 3 shows). BOMB-PLUS.

[CHALLENGE]: Rooster-Horowitz, Demo-Fabiano/Knight; Dino Bravo d. Jack Evans; Curt Hennig d. Omar Atlas. BOMB-PLUS.

(NWA/TBS) - [WCW]: RECAP, Steamboat d. Flair at CLASH VI: Flair's attorney, Dennis Guthrie demands rematch and threatens suit vs. Ted Turner and WCW, and asks for second ref in rematch; Also from N.O.: U.S. TITLE: Lex Luger d. Jack Victory; NWA TV TITLE: Sting d. Rip Morgan; CENTER STAGE: Luger d. Kendall Windham; Bob Orton Jr. d. Shane Douglas; Road Warriors d. Keith Steinborn/Greg Brown; Rick Steiner d. Paul Brown; Ranger Ross/Junkyard Dog d. Iron Sheik/Morgan; Jack Victory d. Randy Rose when Paul E. Dangerously hits Rose with phone; Varsity Club d. Doughnut Don Sanders/Greg Brown; Great Mota d. Bucky Siegler/Gary Royal; DANGER ZONE: Paul E. W. Sting; MORE N.O. RECAPS: U.S. TAG TEAM, WORLD TAG TEAM TITLE matches. RULING: Jim Herd announces May 7 Flair-Steamboat rematch with no time limit and three ex-world champions as judges. DRAW-PLUS.

[NWA MAIN EVENT/SAT.]: Ricky Steamboat d. Snake Brown; Rick Steiner d. Kevin Sullivan; Varsity Club d. Gilbert/Steiner; Ranger Ross d. Chance Myers. DRAW.

[NWA MAIN EVENT/SUN.]: Lex Luger double countout with Michael Hayes; Mota d. Bob Emory/George South; Ron Simmons d. Steve Casey. DRAW.

(NWA/SYND.) - [NWA PRO]: Butch Reed/Hayes d. Tony Suber/Cougar Jay; Breakdance Young (goodbye)/Simmons/Dick Murdoch d. John Brewer/Lee Scott/Rip Morgan; Mota d. Emory; Other winners: Midnight Express, Iron Sheik, Ranger Ross. PEDICINO'S NOSE: Flair-Steamboat and Road Warriors-Varsity Club updates from N.O. BOMB.

[WORLD WIDE]: Gilbert/Steiner d. Lee Scott/Snake Brown; Iron Sheik/Reed d. Jerry Price/Cougar Jay; Young/Murdoch d. Raider/Max McGiver; SST d. Greg Brown/Emory; Luger d. Chance Myers; Steamboat d. Morgan. RESTHOLD...for Steamboat and Lance Russell's exchanges w. Mike Rotunda.

(AWA) - Greg Gagne d. The Nomad; Wayne Bloom/Mike Enos d. Tom Burton/Mike Thor; WOMEN'S TITLE: Wendi Richter DQ over The Dazzler, who throws Wendi over the top. RECAPS: Col. DeBeers-Tommy Jammer, Olympians-Badd Co. MAT CLASSIC: Red Bastein double COR w. Ray Stevens. BOMB-PLUS.

LINES OF THE WEEK - 1. Jim Ross & Paul E. Dangerously, NME: PED, "If Missy Hyatt ever wanted to get in the ring with me, I'd do it." JR, "So would about a million other men." 2. Vince McMahon, WWF: "There's not enough Pepto Bismol in the world to prevent the nausea this man (Larry Poffo) has just created." 3. McMahon & Jesse Ventura, WWF: "Vic, 'Frankie Valdez, the son of Juan Valdez. JV, 'The coffee guy? When Bad News finishes with him, he'll be glad to escort a donkey down a hill.' 4. Dusty Rhodes, PWF: "Many times, the WWF & Madison Square Garden graced my stage. The AWA was graced by Dusty Rhodes." 5. Skandor Akbar, WCCW, to Frank Dusek: "I'm gonna own your body and your soul!" 6. Dusek, WCCW, on reinstating Embry: "It's gonna cost me my job and, certainly, it may cost me my livelihood." 7. Ross & Paul E., NME: PED, "I don't need a bodyguard." JR, "You sure don't with a body like that." 8. Ross & Michael Hayes, WCCW: MH, "Gary Hart is not one of the most popular people in professional wrestling." JR, "Or most handsome." 9. Ross & Hayes, WCCW: MH, "Luger's a Roddy McDowall lookalike." JR, "He's got a Roddy McDowall face and a King Kong body." 10. Larry Zbyszko, AWA: "I'm like Clint Eastwood & John Wayne....men whose checks don't bounce and whose women keep their mouths shut."

11. Ronald V. Gossett IV, CWA, to security guard handcuffing Dutch Mantel: "Take your hands off him. Who do you think you are, Marshal Dillon?" 12. Scotty the Body, Portland: "Look, Madril's got a reverse eylock on Boyd." 13. Gorilla Monsoon & Bobby Heenan, WWF: GM, "Who might the Black Knight be?" BH, "He's the one in the mask...maybe Gladys Knight." 14. Heenan, on Red Rooster's hairdo: "That's nice if you hang around Mr. Rogers." 15. Jesse Ventura, WWF: "Real men don't cut hair and do permanents." 16. Paul E., TBS: "I'm glad Ranger Ross went to Grenada and defended our country from being overrun by 8,000 sheep." 17. Sting, TBS, to Paul E.: "You are, like, SOOOOO ugly, the tide wouldn't even take you out." 18. Paul E., TBS: "You (Sting) might end up with a Randy Rose or Jim Cornette AT&T hangover." 19. Steve Williams

& Lance Russell, WWF: SW, "Why was Mike allowed to come out here and commentate, Coach? LR, "I'd like to ask the same question."

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Jim Herd, TBS: "We really don't care what Dennis Guthrie or Ric Flair say. Ric Flair has spent a career bending the rules." 2. Marc Lowrance, WCCW: "This is too violent! We can't have this on TV any more," commenting on Pringle's juice job. 3. Mike Rotunda, on Vincent Young's breakdance: "I think that's the best move that kid has." 4. Hayes, TBS, on Road Warriors' loss: "They just found out they're not so invincible."

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK - 1. Ross, NME, to Paul E.: "Did you get a student deferment?" 2. Randy Savage, WWF: "Are you hurting, Elizabeth? I'm hurting, too." 3. Scotty the Body, PORTLAND, on Jonathan Boyd: "Hasn't he heard of the Helsinki Formula?"

NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK - 1. "The Genius," given to Lanny Poffo, WWF. 2. "Lust Hogan," given to Hulk by Jesse Ventura.

BEST PICTURES - 1. WCCW, Devastation vs. Embry/Pringle brawl (but it was a bit too graphic). 2. NWA PRO, Muta (that's how we're told it's spelled now) fly onto Bob Emory. 3. NWA PRO, Richie Steamboat trying to grab Bob Caudle's mike.

WORST PICTURE - WCCW, Closeup of paramedic's fanny attending to Pringle.

BEST ANGLE - PORTLAND, Doll & Peterson in The Laundromat.

WORST ANGLE - Sherri Martel/Savage, Liz/Hogan pairings.

DREADED GLITCH AWARD - TBS, for rearranging order of matches taped for WCW, which had Jim Ross twice plugging a Luger-Kendall Windham match which had already aired.

BEST AUDIO - WWF, Bad News Brown in ring asking, "When am I gonna have some competition?"

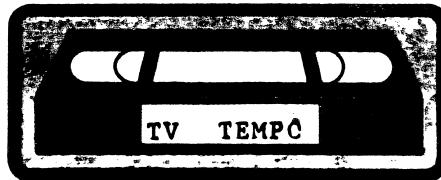
REDUNDANCY AWARD - Sean Mooney, WWF: "There is a new World Wrestling Federation champion in the World Wrestling Federation."

ENGLISH LESSON OF THE WEEK - Ray Stevens, AWA: "What a back-drop he GIVE him."

BLOOPER AWARD - Larry Zbyszko, AWA, calling ESPN's Chris Berman Jim "The Blimp" Berman.

ALL-CLICHE TEAM - 1. Heenan, WWF: "...ripe for the picking." 2. Lee Marshall, AWA: "...frying pan into the fire." 3. Monsoon, WWF: "...history has been made."

BOO AWARD - WCCW, for running so short of time it needed to insert a 7½-minute recap of every match at end of syndie show.



Keirn Florida title match with a melee afterward and a six-man tag that leads to a Slater-Steelman exchange....Dusty has lost his Orlando TV slot to World Wide....CNF is using Cat Collins, a former Montgomery, Ala., deejay, as a heel in a tag match Sunday night against Wendell Cooley & the ever-popular Burrhead Jones. But Collins will have to have a new partner to replace Tom Prichard.

Scotty the Body is going to become a first-class comic heel commentator after he seasons himself more in Portland. I can't say enough good things about how that TV show has improved. The angles are meaningful and the commentary is much crisper....Terry Funk told friends he grew tired of listening to his fellow ex-NWA champs groan about how bad the business has become during the CLASH weekend. I'll bet and hope Terry will be working for TBS soon.

WWF will feature Ted DiBiase vs. Bret Hart on SPOTLIGHT this weekend (excuse me, WEF)....WCCW used a digitizing effect to dilute the intensity of Percy Pringle's pouring blood but you could still see it was not a pretty sight....Curious that the Barbarian only was out with Fuji last Saturday and interviews set up a Jim Neidhart-Barbarian feud. Is Warlord out?....The Ranger Ross and Eddie Gilbert matches shown on the SCW flashback show were edited out in Atlanta because of their prominence in the NWA....Vince announced a June 2 premiere for NO HOLDS BARRED, so it'll be in the video market by August, I guess....Our frequent cartoonist Bill Kunkel has some excellent articles in this month's VIDEO GAMES AND COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT magazine. It's at your newsstand....Two final items: I'll be attending WRESTLE WAR '89 in Nashville and there are some tentative card alterations: Road Warriors now get a rematch vs. Varsity Club for the NWA world tag title, Sting puts up the TV belt vs. Iron Sheik (that could change), SST vs. Shane Douglas and possibly Ricky Santana, Steiner/Gilbert vs. Sullivan/Spivey (again) and Ranger Ross vs. Butch Reed. But none of this would have been official until last Monday. We'll tell you next week....Also, my trader of Stampede tapes has faded away. Any of you Canadian MATWATCHers, I'd like to swap, so let me know. Have a great week! FSB

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SPECIAL NOTES: The primary reason for the change in our type face stems from serious computer problems. We hope to solve them in a few weeks, so I hope you'll bear with us.

In addition, I hope no one is offended when you call and my answering machine asks you to try again if you don't have news or information for MATWATCH. As kind as I can make this: there's only one of me and more than 440 of you. I could never afford the bill for all of those return calls. I love your calls and I love chatting with you but I hope you understand that condition. FSB

Jim Herd makes an excellent figurehead spokesperson for the NWA and his comment on Flair "making a career bending the rules" semi-diffuses the sympathy for Flair's loss but not with all of those many Flair fans....I don't know if they can ever get it through Tommy Edwards' head how abrupt the edits and transitions are between segments on the NWA shows with no digital effects but the post-production on the TBS and syndie shows was very weak last weekend....The Sting-Paul E. DANGER ZONE bit was good but the music stayed too loud too long for the full effect of Sting's scare job to be felt at home....But wasn't the CENTER STAGE site lively? I'll be hitting (or already have hit) Tuesday night's taping....In Daytona Beach, before a small crowd, angles were shot involving Hayes Pearl harboring Luger during an NWA PRO interview and a later Hayes jump job on Ranger Ross. Also, an exchange between Bob Orton and Dick Murdoch. They'll air the next two weekends.

Dusty promoted HOMECOMING II for May 6 in Miami. Larry Zbyszko was plugged to defend the AWA title, Wendi Richter putting up the AWA women's belt, a Steelman-Slater match and possibly a Texas Chainsaw Match between Dusty & Terry Funk or a Rhodes-Manny Fernandez PWF title bout....Next Saturday on PWF, an Al Perez-Steve

POST-MORTEM: SUPER SUNDAY

"Were you on drugs when you rated those shows?"

So went one of the responses to our 25-SCALE instant reviews of WRESTLEMANIA V and CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS. I will stand with the ratings because that's what I gave you. However, I've made a key decision: I'm never going to do the 25 Scale again when I have a crowd watching with me. Yes, I reviewed the shows separately and alone Monday and Tuesday nights of last week and a lot of things I would rate differently:

---QUALITY OF PRODUCTION: I would grade the NWA down at least one point because, while it was one of the better efforts, no way was it a 4.5. I saw many more missed camera shots, including Eddie Gilbert's use of the Gucci bag and a clear-cut shot of Teddy Long's fast-count.

---QUALITY OF MATCHES: Flair-Steamboat would be upgraded to a PINFALL! even if I liked CHI-TOWN better. Why? I was mesmerized at how they may be among the only half-dozen in the U.S. who could have pulled that off. I also would have graded WM5's overall group down by a half point...including a lower rating for Hogan-Savage because the finish irritated me even more on second glance.

---PIPER'S PIT: The crowd with me laughed a lot at this and I thought it was much better than when I viewed it Monday night. It was twice too long as it should have been. Plus, it's ironic that Morton Downey Jr. wrote his entire syndication lineup the week before WM5 to say he was cleaning up the profanity and tabloid nature of his show and "getting serious." And then he gets trashed with a fire extinguisher. At least Donahue only wore a dress on his show.

---CROWD ENTHUSIASM: No question. Even the slim crowd at the Superdome was more into things. But still not like the Greensboro folks last year.

I still contend TBS should be graded down 1.0 to 1.5 for the failure to get Sting & Luger on. But one caller told me he thought the fact that they did not and announced it (not intentionally

PINFALL PROFILE

so, I assure you) added more intensity to the importance of Flair-Steamboat. A valid point.

There is no question CLASH was a better wrestling show but enough "little" things kept it from being the best "produced" show.

Key notes on the day:

BEST PLAY-BY-PLAY - Jim Ross, TBS. No contest.

BEST COLOR - Jesse Ventura, WM5. Michael Hayes is coming on strong and Terry Funk added much credibility to the NWA title match but Jesse was one of the few bright spots on the WM5 day.

BEST MATCH - Steamboat vs. Flair, TBS, like Secretariat winning the Belmont.

WORST MATCH - Andre the Giant vs. Jake Roberts, WM5, with Dino Bravo vs. Ronnie Garvin and JYD-Butch Reed, TBS, close. Andre-Jake is in the Worst of the Year category.

BEST ANGLE - Flair-Steamboat reverse angle replay, TBS. Road Warriors' fast count loss would rate second.

WORST ANGLE - 1. Jake using Damien on Andre again. It's old, fellows. 2. Rick Martel turn. Did anybody really care? 3. Downey being extinguished.

SURPRISE MATCH - Rockers vs. Twin Towers, WM5. Even though some disliked the finish, I thought it was an amazing combo of speed, aerials and brute power.

DISAPPOINTING MATCH - Curt Hennig vs. Blue Blazer, WM5. This could have been so much more.

TOO LONG AWARD - 1. Band accompanying JYD to ring, TBS. 2. PIPER'S PIT, WM5.

BEST PICTURES - 1. Flair's foot through ropes on reverse angle, TBS. 2. Sheepwackers licking Sean Mooney, WM5. 3. Akeem/Bossman avalanche, WM5. 4. Superdome light shows, TBS. 5. Haku attempt at flying tackle, WM5.

WORST PICTURES - 1. Ranger Ross parachuting, TBS (no lighting). 2. Snot coming out of Jim Duggan's nose, WM5. 3. Brother Love's fat fanny, WM5.

WORST INTERVIEW - Sean Mooney with Donald Trump, WM5.

BEST LINES - 1. Michael Hayes, TBS: "These are real rasslers. They are under a commission." 2. Morton Downey, WM5, to Bro. Love: "Any guy who wears a skirt, I don't want to LUV me." 3. Piper, to Bro. Love: "This guy has child-bearing hips, wouldn't you say?" 4. Ventura, WM5: "If one of 'em (Duggan or Brown) tries a hold, he might win it." 5. Terry Funk, TBS: "This is the most important match for the most important title in the world." 6. Hayes, TBS: "I'm not gonna interfere. I promised Uncle Ted." 7. Funk, TBS: "These men are the best. I'm not talking about walking around the ring and posing." 8. Ventura, WM5: "What would a gorilla know about bearhugs?" 9. Ross, TBS: "I know a couple of speech pathologists that may help him (Steiner). I went to 'em. They couldn't do much for me." 10. Ventura, WM5: "I'll give Hogan a job in Hollywood. He can drive my limo." 11. Ross, TBS: "Murdoch has dotted a few i's and crossed a few t's on Bourbon Street." 12. Ventura and Monsoon, WM5: "Where did you get weighted, Gorilla?" "I went to the truck stops."

FINAL NOTE: Strong talk is if Titan can get out of its multiyear deal with Trump Plaza, it will move WM6 to either Toronto or possibly even Wembley Stadium in London. The NWA has had the suggestion of a big show in St. Louis if it ever does another major card involving its legends. It makes sense, considering the history of the Muchnick years.

COMINGS & GOINGS

FRIDAY NIGHT AT THE FIGHTS: TBS has given the go-ahead for a weekly Friday night NWA series beginning June 23. A format has not been developed but is in the works. The show will air at 10:30 p.m. (EDT) or immediately after the Atlanta Braves game on that evening, except before the Braves when they play on the West Coast.

WCCW: Friday night, Eric Embry and Gary Young were to meet in a loser-leave-WCCW match (who believes these things any more) and since neither one of them are to leave Jerry Jarrett's employ soon, one wonders how they'll explain this one away.

CLEVELAND CLASH: Cleveland TN hosted the Southland Wrestling Association again last Friday. Buddy Landel was on the card vs. the champion Super D for his Southland title. The Dog vs. The Mongolian Stomper, "Mr. Wrestling" & Ron Sexton vs. The Storm Trooper & Deke Rivers plus Butch Mantel vs. Larry Santana.

WWF ON NWA: That the WWF hotline spot made it onto the last break of the TBS CLASH is indicative of how much educating the Turner folks have to do in their company about the war between them and McMahon. It was, indeed, like last year---filed under the name of a dummy corporation and unchecked by a weekend traffic person.

CNN OFF NWA: What is less explicable is that CNN and Headline News did stories on WM5, including on CNN SPORTS TONIGHT....and ignored CLASH VI. WM5 was a legitimate news story whether Turner owned the company or not but I would have made certain my staff covered both.

TURNER AT THE STAGE: Ted Turner appeared at Tuesday night's (April 11) WCW taping at CENTER STAGE and had his photo made with Flair for the cover of PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED. Senior v.p. Jim Herd was also interviewed for insertion into one of the shows.

GUMBEL'S GUMBALL: Bryant Gumbel gave the NWA an unexpected plug on the TODAY show 7:25 a.m. cut-in Monday which most viewers don't see unless your station doesn't do local news. Gumbel was discussing WM5 with Jane Pauley and said, "Hey, Ted Turner had Ricky Steamboat and Ric Flair go 2 out of 3 falls yesterday. I watched that one and it was great!" That's frightening when one of your biggest national plugs comes from the Ayatollah of Arrogance.

NO TOM, NO TITLE: As of midweek, no word had come on how the CWF would explain its title situation with Tom Prichard leaving. It could be one of those office title situations or it could be declared vacant.

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2 ISSUES REMAINING

1 ISSUE REMAINING

FINAL ISSUE OF SUBSCRIPTION

FINAL REMINDER TO RENEW

**I REMEMBER: Nick Bockwinkel vs.
Alberto Torres**

In the days when Nick Bockwinkel was building his rep as more than just a second-generation wrestler, he campaigned in Georgia and dominated as the state champion for nearly two years.

As "the heel with class," Nick was hated by all categories in the Peach State but one summer night in Waycross, Ga., in 1969, he was almost the cause of the death of promoter Aaron Newman.

Two weeks prior, Alberto Torres had Bockwinkel all set to take the Georgia belt away when Nick threw Al over the top rope. A rematch was demanded with no disqualification the stipulation.

Nearly a thousand crammed into the hot City Auditorium for the return. Torres took the first fall with a variation of Ricky Steamboat's chicken wing (yep, Nick conceded). Bockwinkel rallied to grab fall two with a power suplex. But it was the third fall which nearly brought out Sheriff W.E. (Big Strick) Strickland's boys.

After Torres nearly sewed up the match with an abdominal stretch, Bockwinkel made it to the ropes and both men rolled out of the ring. Referee Eddie Smith began the count as both men brawled to a staccato chant of the crowd. But as Smith counted nine, Bockwinkel slid back in and Torres was counted out. Nick's hand was raised and he smartly dashed to the dressing room. The fans, however, were livid. Demands of money back were shouted throughout the building. "It's supposed to be a NO DISQUALIFICATION match and you disqualified him," school custodian James Pittman yelled at Newman.

Local cult figure Kirk Freeman took it a step further. After Newman denied a DQ was the same as a countout, Freeman grabbed the ring mike from the promoter and exclaimed, "If Bockwinkel's name is Bockwinkel, then Newman, your name is S---winkel!" He added: "What I need is to get Howard Freeman Sr. down here and take a double barrel shotgun to you." As an angry mob surrounded Newman, Police Capt. Gene Hatfield captured the mike from the incessant Freeman and Newman had police escorts to the dressing room.

(NEXT: Torres-Bockwinkel: Final Chapter)



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